

5825

DISSEMINATION

for EGYPT file

2008 MAY 15 PM 12:37
CRM/ISS/REGISTRATION UNIT

Egyptian Gaza Border Security Initiatives

The Egyptian Defense Ministry has taken significant steps to enhance security on the Gaza border. In late 2007, *the Defense Ministry reprioritized 17 items of border security equipment worth \$165 million in FMS purchases and placed them at the top of their priority list for FY08.* These items were already in the Egyptian program due to their concerns about border security. In addition, they requested *\$23 million more in FMS purchases of tunnel detection and exploitation equipment.* These steps were a direct result of recommendations from a team of US Army Corps of Engineers who conducted a site survey of the Gaza border in November 2007.

The Army Corps of Engineers experts *were given uninhibited access to the Gaza border* and performed a site-survey along the Raffa section. They concluded that the situation in Raffa presents a “worst case scenario “ for detecting and exploiting clandestine tunnels. The tunnels are small in diameter, long and very deep. Their openings are in dense urban areas that preclude rigorous surveillance on the Gaza side of the border. Other openings are in agricultural fields and are sandbagged and covered with up to 2 meters of soil for later use.

The team provided a variety of recommendations and technology which the Defense Ministry immediately accepted. The technology recommended is readily available commercially, but needs significant customization for the Border Security Forces' applications. It includes: seismic/acoustic tunnel detection systems with command and control capabilities, unmanned ground vehicles, and hand-held FLIR devices.

The experts also recommended a follow-on US team to train an Egyptian Tunnel Detection, Exploitation, and Remediation Team. This cadre will receive detection training, exploitation and law enforcement techniques and practices, as well as how to maintain a tunnel database and operate detection equipment.

The equipment will be installed at a training site in the continental US beginning in August and 24 Egyptian personnel will arrive in October for a month of training. Then the equipment will be transported and deployed to the border site in Egypt, expected in January 2009. After final evaluation and supervision by the US Army Corps of Engineers, full operational control of the system should be turned over to Egyptian authorities by March 2009.